

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 TRSE-00 MCT-01 /079 W
-----068393 160044Z /21

R 150612Z JUN 78
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 50
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJ: POLITICAL VIOLENCE DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A) 1977 ANKARA 4242; B) ISTANBUL 108; C) ISTANBUL 1544

SUMMARY: AS RECENT DEATHS OF SIX PERSONS IN ISTANBUL
DEMONSTRATES, POLITICAL VIOLENCE REMAINS AND PROMISES TO
CONTINUE AS MAJOR PROBLEM FOR GOT. TRENDS HERE DURING LAST
SEVERAL WEEKS, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT THERE IS AT LEAST
REASON TO HOPE THAT IT CAN BE CONTAINED AT LEVEL WHICH
WILL NOT POSE A THREAT TO THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH SIX PERSONS KILLED OVER WEEKEND, WE
ARE REMINDED AGAIN THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINGERS AS GOT'S
NUMBER ONE PROBLEM LATEST INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATE HOW STREET
BATTLES BETWEEN EXTREME LEFTISTS AND RIGHTISTS YOUTH
GROUPS HAVE GAINED MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN. IN TWO SEPARATE
INCIDENTS JUNE 9, THREE PERSONS DIED, AMONG THEM TWO RIGHTIST
STUDENTS WHO WERE BRUTALLY MURDERED AFTER BEING KIDNAPPED AT
GUNPOINT. NEXT DAY, IN APPARENT RETALIATION, RIGHTISTS
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FIRE INTO COFFEEHOUSE KILLING THREE PERSONS.

2. ALTHOUGH GOT SECURITY OFFICIALS ADMIT TO LITTLE
SUCCESS IN CONTROLLING THESE, WHAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR TERMS
"HIT AND RUN" INCIDENTS, SEEMS TO US SECURITY MEASURES HAVE
HAD SOME IMPACT. IN ISTANBUL, HORRENDOUS RATE OF INCREASED
VIOLENCE WHICH GREETED NEW ECEVIT ADMINISTRATION IN JANUARY

AND FEBRUARY LEVELED OUT IN MARCH, AND THERE WAS SLIGHT DECREASE IN APRIL AND MAY. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN SHIFT IN TYPE OF VIOLENCE WE NOW WITNESS. CLASHES ON THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES ARE RARE WITH CONTINUED PRESENCE OF "JANDARMA" TROOPS TO MAINTAIN ORDER. BANK ROBBERIES ARE FEWER NOW AND BOMBINGS OF LARGE FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CORPORATIONS AND BANKS (FAVORED TARGETS OF EXTREME LEFTISTS) HAVE DECREASED. STEPPED-UP SECURITY FOR BANKS AND SUCCESS BY AUTHORITIES IN CLAMPING DOWN ON SEVERAL RADICAL TERRORIST GROUPS APPEAR TO HAVE BROUGHT LIMITED RESULTS. WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, INCIDENTS IN CITY NOW SEEM IN LARGE PART TO REVOLVE AROUND VIRTUAL GANG WARFARE BETWEEN LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST YOUTH GROUPS. THERE ARE STILL ALMOST DAILY BOMBINGS IN ISTANBUL, BUT THEY ARE GENERALLY DIRECTED AGAINST SCHOOLS WHERE CLASHES HAVE OCCURRED OR AGAINST ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE MEMBERS ARE PARTICIPANTS IN VIOLENCE OR ARE IDEOLOGICALLY IDENTIFIED WITH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

3. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, DISTURBING EXCEPTIONS TO THIS TREND IN RECENT WEEKS. ONE WAS BOMB ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF A MILITARY PROSECUTOR IN ISTANBUL. (ONE NEWSPAPER HAS MADE MUCH OF FACT THAT HE WAS INVESTIGATING A KURDISH TERRORIST GROUP AT TIME OF ATTACK.) IN ADDITION, BOMBS WHICH DID LIMITED DAMAGE EXPLODED AT CONSULATE GENERALS OF BELGIUM AND FRANCE. THESE OCCURRED SHORTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFTER THOSE COUNTRIES SENT TROOPS INTO ZAIRE. THERE ARE SMALL GROUPS OF RADICAL MARXISTS IN THE CITY WHICH ARE EXPECIALLY ATTUNED TO INTERNATIONAL LEFTIST CAUSES. SIMILAR BOMBINGS OCCURRED LAST YEAR FOR INSTANCE AT A GERMAN SCHOOL AFTER BAADER-MEINHOF SUICIDES AND AT DUTCH CONSULATE AFTER LAST MOLUCCAN INCIDENT. GIVEN CURRENT BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC SECURITY, THESE GROUPS CAN CARRY OUT SUCH ACTIVITY IN POLITICAL MILIEU WHICH HAS ALL BUT ACCEPTED BOMBINGS AS A LEGITIMATE FORM OF PROTEST.

4. IN WAKE OF ASSASINATION OF TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN (REF A), WE ARE PLEASED THAT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO ACT OF RETALIATION BY EXTREMISTS AGAINST ISTANBUL'S ARMENIAN COMMUNITY. AS CONGEN HAS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (REF B) SUCH A TREND OF RETALIATION AGAINST THE COMMUNITY BEGAN TO TAKE FORM LAST YEAR AFTER ARMENIAN TERRORIST GROUPS' ATTACKS AGAINST TURKISH TARGETS ABROAD (REF B).

5. OTHER THAN THREAT AGAINST LOCAL ITT REPRESENTATIVE (REF C) IN RECENT WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN NO VIOLENT ACTIONS DIRECTED ATAINST U.S. PERSONNEL OR INSTALLATIONS. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS COULD, OF COURSE, MAKE US TARGET OF

TERRORIST ATTACKS AS THEY HAVE OTHER COUNTRIES (PARA 4)
BUT MAINSTREAM OF CURRENT ISTANBUL VARIETY OF VIOLENCE
IS DOMESTIC STRUGGLE TO WHICH U.S. IS HAPPILY PERIPHERAL.

6. COMMENT: WE WERE ENCOURAGED THAT LAST MONTH TWO
MAJOR POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD IN CITY'S
TAKSIM SQUARE WITH NO MAJOR INCIDENT. MAY DAY RALLY
AND JP'S "COUNTER-RALLY" ON MAY 26 WERE CONDUCTED UNDER
VERY TIGHT SECURITY MEASURES WHICH DEMONSTRATED GOVERN-
MENT'S ABILITY TO GUARANTEE CONDUCT OF PEACEFUL
POLITICAL ACTIVITY. EVEN LOCAL CHAIRMAN OF JUSTICE
PARTY (JP) TOLD US HE WAS PLEASED WITH AUTHORITIES'
PRECAUTIONS FOR THEIR GATHERING.

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7. CLEARLY POLITICAL VIOLENCE ISSUE IS NOT GOING TO
GO AWAY, AND OPPOSITION WILL OBVIOUSLY MAKE THE MOST
OF IT. WHILE ECEVIT WAS WINNING FOREIGN POLICY KUDOS
DURING HIS TRIP TO EUROPE AND U.S., JP LEADER SULEYMAN
DEMIREL WAS HAMMERING AWAY ON THIS ISSUE AT HOME.
BUT AS INDICATED ABOVE THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT
VIOLENCE CAN BE CONTAINED AT LEVEL WHICH WILL NOT
POSE A THREAT TO THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT. END COMMENT.
GORMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SITREP, POLITICAL SITUATION, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ISTANB01790
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780251-0511
Format: TEL
From: ISTANBUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780657/aaaabwse.tel
Line Count: 145
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 499d6088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ISTANBUL 108, 78 ISTANBUL 1544
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2342366
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL VIOLENCE DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: PINT, TU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/499d6088-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014